

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 70

By Shaw

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie for her many achievements and contributions to society and religion upon her visit to St. Mark African Methodist Episcopal Church in Parsons, Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable public servants who have dedicated their professional careers and personal excellence to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, one such individual is Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, who will be visiting the St. Mark African Methodist Episcopal Church in Parsons, Tennessee, on February 13, 2005, to participate in the church's Founder's Day and Black History Celebration Service; and

WHEREAS, selected as the first female in the 214-year history of the African Methodist Episcopal Church to obtain that Episcopal Office, Bishop McKenzie is now the president of the Council of Bishops and Titular Head of the denomination; she serves as the presiding prelate of the 13th Episcopal District, including the states of Kentucky and Tennessee and has served as the chief pastor of the 18th Episcopal District of the AME Church, which comprises Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland in Southern Africa; and

WHEREAS, throughout her exemplary tenure as the 117th elected and consecrated bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Bishop McKenzie has distinguished herself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and an exceptional asset to her community; and

WHEREAS, a member of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Board of Trustees for Wilberforce University, and the National Advisory Board of the Family and Community Violence Prevention Program for historically black colleges

and universities, Bishop McKenzie is the celebrated author of *Not Without a Struggle* and *Strength in Struggle*; and

WHEREAS, renowned across the nation, Bishop McKenzie was selected for an Honor Roll of Great African-American Preachers by a poll of national, civic, social, religious, and academic leaders; she has been featured in the national news magazine *Time* and the November issue of *Ebony Magazine*, and in 1997, she was listed as the top African American Female Preacher in the same publication; and

WHEREAS, an empowering and electrifying speaker, Bishop McKenzie has thrice been invited to address the Democratic National Convention, giving the closing invocation in 1996 and 2000 and addressing the delegates in 2004; and

WHEREAS, Bishop McKenzie's outstanding success as a preacher and church administrator, public servant, and civic leader is directly attributable to her reliance on the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and her uncommon ability to work well with people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, through her many charitable works, Bishop McKenzie is initiating a vision to rebuilding lives, churches, and communities by revitalizing the Thirteenth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, this vision will be implemented through deepening Christian lifestyles by exercising Spiritual Disciplines; resourcing local churches; planting new congregations; training a new generation of leaders; creating shared learning opportunities for clergy and lay; focusing on developing men and young adult ministry; acquiring and practicing healthy habits; identifying and utilizing non-traditional funding sources; developing a faith based non-profit to be called Believe, Inc.; and utilizing new technology to improve communication and visibility of the Thirteenth District; and

WHEREAS, Bishop McKenzie is an extremely giving person who often reaches out with compassion to people whom life has treated unkindly, and she epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional, dedicated public servant, and reliable friend; and

WHEREAS, her many accomplishments aside, Bishop McKenzie is fortunate to share both love and companionship with her husband, Stan McKenzie, and their three children; and

WHEREAS, Bishop McKenzie is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and she should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that that we welcome Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie on her visit to the St. Mark African Methodist Episcopal Church in Parsons, honor and commend her for her many years of devoted public service, and extend to her our best wishes for continued success in all her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.